

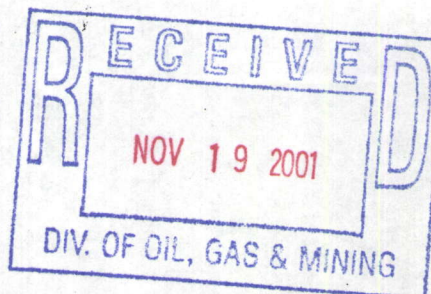
Sent Nov. 16-01

S/37/116

Winston Hurst  
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P. O. Box 100  
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November 14, 2001

Kenneth L. Wintch  
Utah State Inst. & Trust Lands Admin.  
676 East 500 South  
Suite 500  
Salt Lake City, UT 84102-2818



Subject: Survey Report U01-AS0726s, re. SITLA materials lease ML-48768, Sean Murphy

Dear ken:

Enclosed find my report "Cultural Resources Inventory of a proposed Commercial Rock Quarry Site on Alkali Point, San Juan County, Utah, Phase II." This report and the attached IMACS form relate to proposed expansion of quarrying operations within the area of the SITLA materials lease permit ML-48768, issued to Sean Murphy of Blanding. Copies of this material are also being distributed to Murphy and SHPO.

Sincerely,

Winston Hurst

-c: Sean Murphy



Cultural Resources Inventory of a Proposed Commercial Rock Quarry Site  
on Alkali Point, San Juan County, Utah, Phase II.  
(SITLA materials lease permit ML48768)

by  
Winston Hurst

Submitted to the State of Utah  
School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Utah State Antiquities Permit/Project Number  
U01-AS0726s

Abajo Archaeology  
PO Box 100  
Bluff, Utah 84512

October 31, 2001

**Cultural Resources Inventory of a Proposed Commercial Rock Quarry Site  
on Alkali Point, San Juan County, Utah, Phase II  
(SITLA materials lease permit ML48768)**

**Introduction**

This report presents the findings of an intensive cultural resources inventory of a small parcel of land administered by the State of Utah, School and Institutional Trust Administration (SITLA) on Alkali Point near Blanding, San Juan County, Utah (Figure 1). The parcel is the subject of a lease application by Sean Murphy of Blanding, who contracted Abajo Archaeology to conduct the survey in compliance with SITLA's lease process requirements. Murphy proposes to develop the property as a commercial quarry for building stone. This survey parcel lies adjacent to a parcel surveyed previously for Murphy by Abajo (Hurst 2001), and falls under the same SITLA materials lease (ML48768).

The survey parcel is located approximately 12 miles (20 km) southeast of Blanding within the area covered by the McCracken Spring USGS topographic quadrangle map (Figure 2). It consists of approximately the west half of the NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 16, Township 38 South Range 24 E; and adjacent small portions of the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 and the SW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 E 1/4 of the same section. The parcel forms a reverse L shape, contiguous to the southeast corner of the area previously surveyed. This parcel encompasses 19,425 m<sup>2</sup> (2.14 ha, 5.3 acres) with its corners located at the following Universal Transverse Mercator grid coordinates (Zone 12, hand-held GPS, not averaged):

651,155 E	4,150,000 N
651, 260 E	4,150,000 N
651, 260 E	4,149,815 N
651,110 E	4,149,815 N
651, 110 E	4,149,860 N
651, 155 E	4,149,860 N

The inventory was conducted by Winston Hurst on October 29, 2001, under Utah State antiquities permit number U01-AS0726s, issued to Abajo Archaeology. The project resulted in documentation of one archaeological site and seven isolated finds.

**Environment**

The survey parcel is located at an elevation of approximately 5210 to 5325 feet above mean sea level on the west rim and adjacent talus slope of small, unnamed canyon which is tributary to a larger but still eastern tributary of Alkali Wash. Vegetation is dominated by mature growth of pinyon-juniper woodland with minimal understory. Topography is diverse, including the slopes of a small mesa top ridge, a gently-sloping to nearly level bench between the ridge and the canyon

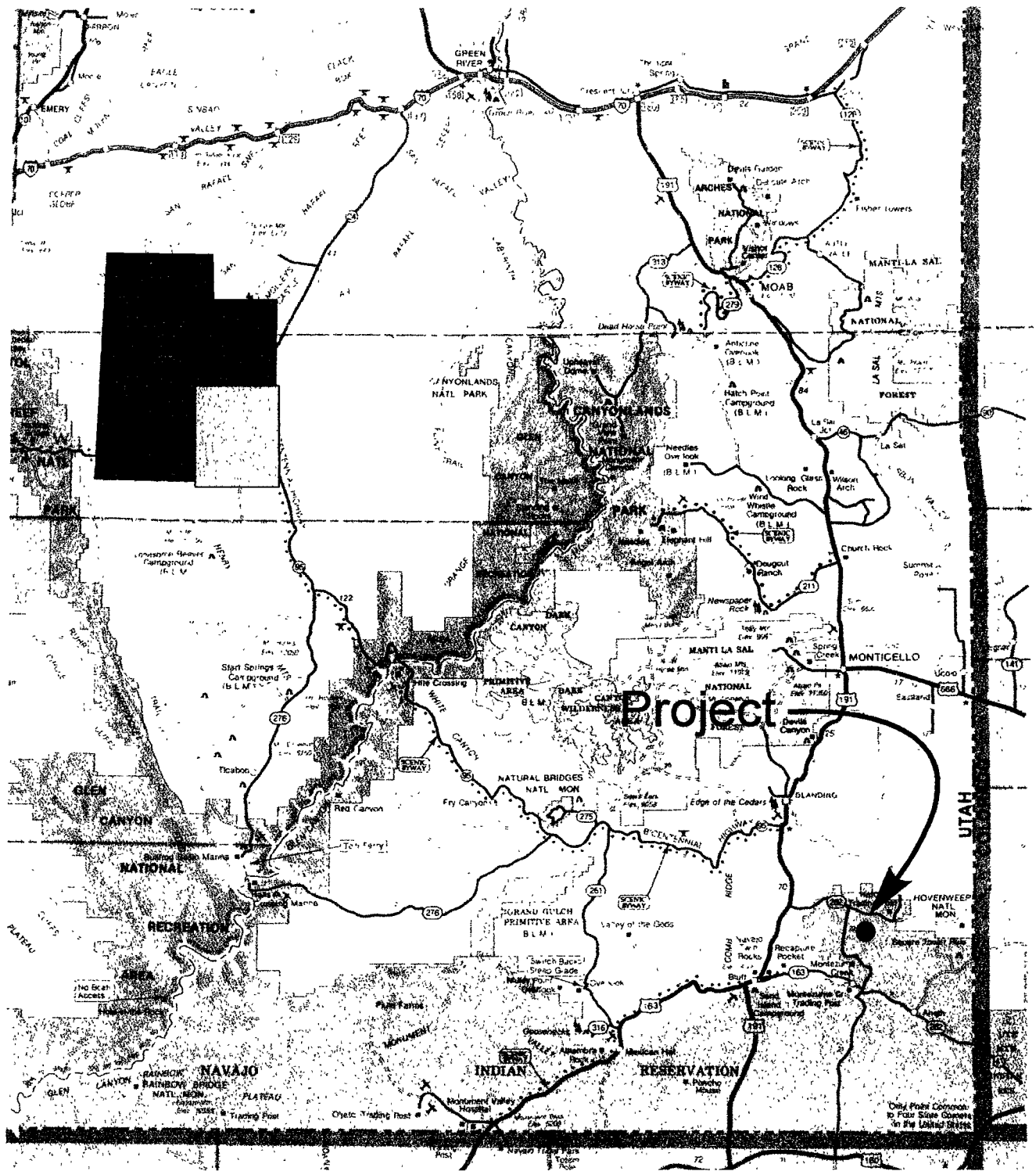
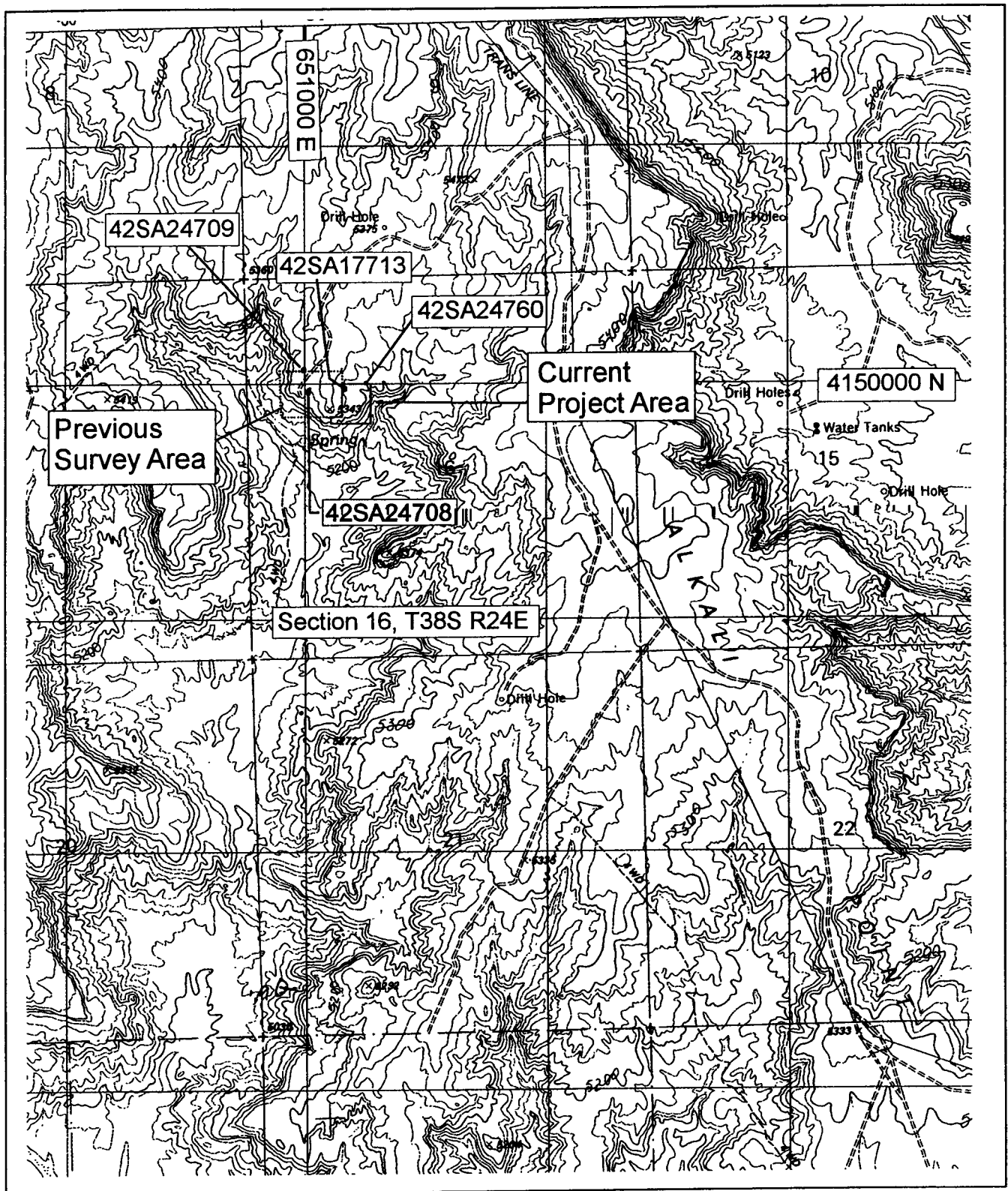


Figure 1. Project location



**Figure 2.** Project location, with archaeological sites plotted (USGS McCracken Spring, Utah 7.5' quadrangle)



rim rock, and a steep scarp of rock outcrops, ledges and talus descending to a bench to the south and into the bottom of the small canyon to the east. Surface sediments are thin to nonexistent and rocky, including thin patches of aeolian loess (most common in the northwestern and extreme southwestern portions of the parcel), residual sand, clay/shale and outcrops of variably resistant sandstone and mudstone. These rocks are all mapped as Cretaceous Burro Canyon formation by Haynes, Vogel and Wyant (1972), and presumably represent the westward tailing out of that formation in an inter-fingering facies transition with the uppermost rocks of the underlying Brushy Basin member of the Jurassic-age Morrison Formation. Decomposed Dakota or Burro Canyon conglomerate has left a scatter of pebbles and occasional small cobbles, including a light gray-cream-white chert and occasional red-brown and white quartzites.

An old seismic exploration transect can be traced, trending northeast - southwest through the western portion of the parcel and crossing the southeast corner of the previously surveyed adjacent parcel. An old vehicle track marks the access trail to that transect from the northwest, across the small ridge that overlooks the survey area.

### **Previous Work**

The surrounding region has been the focus of numerous seismic, road, drill pad and other surveys, resulting in the recording of many sites. No review of that work is attempted here (for a general review of regional research and findings, see Hurst 1992, a copy of which is on file at Edge of the Cedars State Park). Although it focuses on southwestern Colorado, The recent survey volume by Lipe and others (1999) provides a useful, up-to-date cultural context overview that is generally applicable to the project area.

A search of site files at the Bureau of Land Management, San Juan Resource Area office in Monticello<sup>1</sup> conducted prior to the first survey turned up only one previously recorded archaeological site in the vicinity, recorded by Barry Hibbetts of LaPlata Archaeological Consultants as part of a seismic-line clearance survey in 1986. That site, 42SA17713,<sup>2</sup> was slightly misplotted on the smaller-scale 15' topo sheet available at that time, a short distance northeast of the present parcel. It was relocated in the initial survey at the east edge of the survey parcel, and more precisely plotted with the help of a hand-held GPS instrument and the larger-scale topographic quadrangle sheet (Hurst 2001). That site is actually located within the area surveyed and reported here. The Abajo survey of the initial quarry parcel also resulted in

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<sup>1</sup>The Utah Division of State History maintains a master site file of all recorded archaeological sites in the state. The local Bureau of Land Management office maintains a duplicate file for San Juan County, in order to facilitate local file searches and as a backup in the event of catastrophic damage or loss of the State's records.

<sup>2</sup>The state of Utah utilizes the Smithsonian Institution's system for identifying archaeological sites and organizing site data throughout the state. "42" is the number for Utah (the 42<sup>nd</sup> state on the Smithsonian's list), "SA" signifies San Juan County, and the following number is a serial number of sites recorded within the county. This is therefore the 17713th site to be officially assigned a number in San Juan county. Numbers are assigned and master files maintained by the Utah Division of State History in Salt Lake City.

first-time documentation of two small sites (42SA24708, a probable deflated ceramic kiln site with associated ceramic scatter; and 42SA24709, a ceramic kiln with no associated artifacts) and five isolated finds (an ash stain, an axe head fragment, two small ceramic sherd clusters and fragments of a tested chert cobble). No other archaeological work has been reported in the immediate vicinity.

### **Methodology**

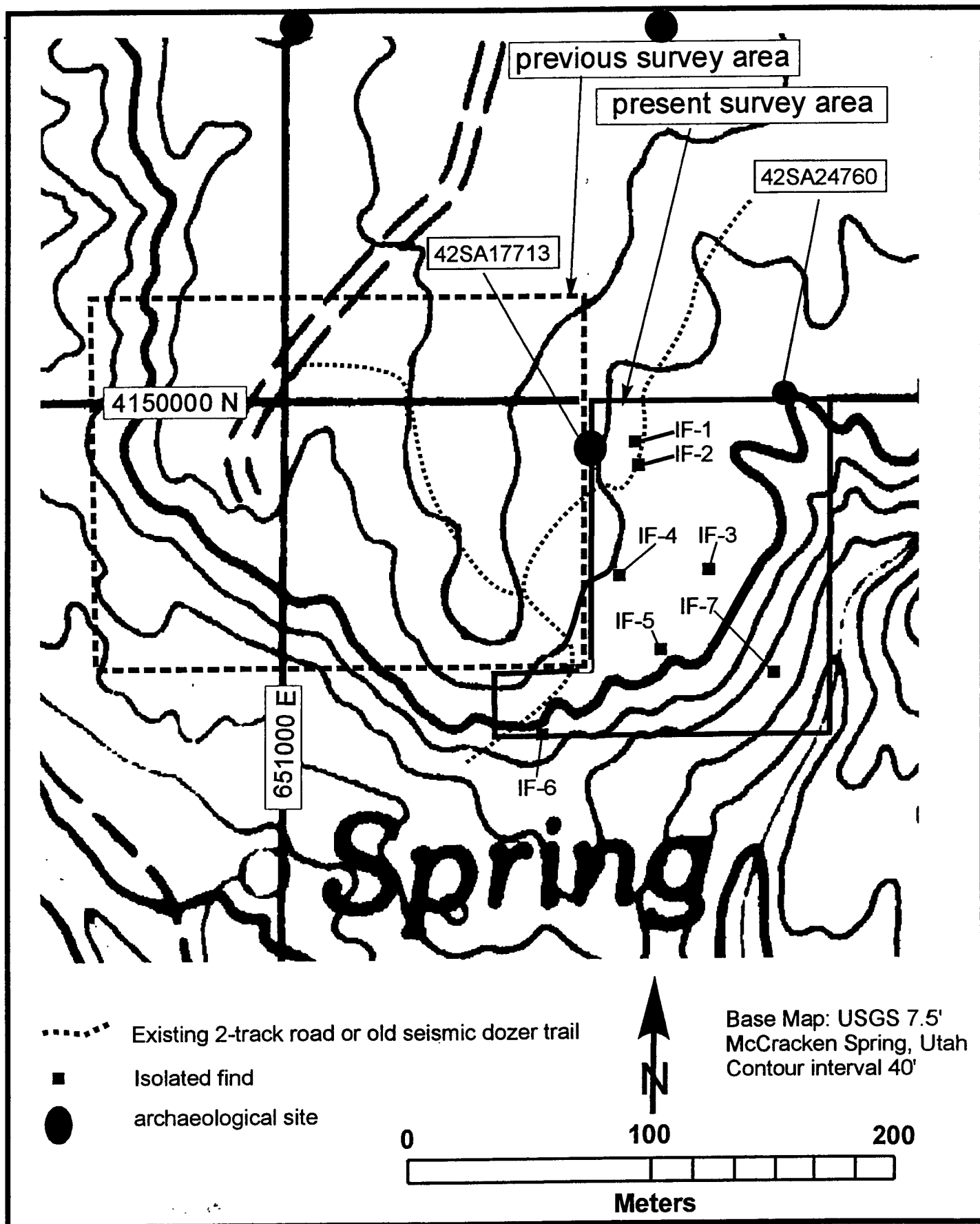
Parcel corners and boundaries were identified using a hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) instrument to locate Universal Transverse Mercator grid coordinates estimated by mapping the parcel onto a USGS topographic quad map and computing their UTM coordinates with a UTM template. Parcel corners were flagged with orange flagging tied onto trees. Intermittent flags were tied to trees at irregular intervals along the boundaries of the parcel as well, also located by GPS. The ground surface within the survey area was intensively examined for cultural resources to a distance of approximately 10 m beyond the flagged boundaries on all sides due to the possibility of plotting and measuring error in the UTM map measurement, and/or instrumental error on the part of the GPS unit.

In order to facilitate thorough coverage, the parcel was examined in natural topographic/geographic pieces divided and defined by such features as the canyon rim, the road, the break in slope at the edges of the ridge top, a prominent drainage, and so forth. Within each such piece, the surface was systematically examined by walking through it in zigzag pattern, until the spacing between lines of footprints exceeded no more than 10 m maximum. This spacing is adequate to ensure that no sites were overlooked, and to minimize the likelihood that significant isolated finds were missed.

Although the archaeological record is light in the survey parcel, the inventory resulted in identification of one unrecorded site and seven isolated finds (IFs). The site was photographed with black-and-white (Kodak TMAX 100) film; plotted on a 400% enlargement from the USGS topo quad map with the help of the hand-held GPS instrument; mapped and recorded on Intermountain Antiquities Computer System (IMACS) forms. A site datum was established and marked with an aluminum cap, stamped with the site and project number and set on a steel rebar post. Isolated finds were assigned a serial IF- number, plotted on the topo map and minimally described. Primary copies of site forms and this report will be filed at the Utah State Division of History, Antiquities Section, in Salt Lake City. Original field records including photographic negatives are curated in the author's personal project files.

### **Findings and Recommendations**

One previously recorded archaeological site, one newly recorded archaeological site, and seven isolated finds were documented in the course of the survey. The site locations are shown on Figures 2 and 3, and IF locations are shown on Figure 3. The sites and isolated finds will be



**Figure 3.** Enlarged topographic map of project with archaeological site and isolated find locations. (Enlarged from USGS McCracken Spring 7.5' quadrangle).



discussed in turn, with significance assessment and management recommendations. These findings are summarized in the accompanying table.

#### **Site 42SA11713 (Figure 4)**

##### Location and environment

This previously recorded site is located at UTM (Zone 12) coordinates 651160 E / 4149975 N, at the east edge of the parcel boundary on the east slope of the ridge, where the steeper, upper slope gives way to a gentler, lower slope. Site elevation is 5320 feet. The ground slope on site is approximately 4°. Local surface sediments are shallow, residual and aeolian with numerous rock inclusions including sandstone slabs up to 25 cm long and pebbles from decomposed conglomerate. Vegetation is dominated by climax pinyon-juniper forest up to ~5 m high, with very little understory. Surface disturbance indicative of seismic exploration is evident within about 40 m to the south of the site.

##### Description and interpretation

Site 42SA17713 was originally recorded by Barry Hibbetts of La Plata Archaeological Consultants in 1986, and re-recorded by me in August of 2001. The site is a discrete, ca. 15 m diameter, slightly mounded, dense concentration of hundreds of oxidized and sooted sandstone slabs and 60+ potsherds in a matrix of ashy sediment. For a full description of the site, see Hurst 2001.

##### Significance

Site 42SA17713 is deemed archaeologically significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under the Secretary of the Interior's criteria C ("... embody[s] the distinctive characteristics of a type, period [etc.] . . .") and D (is "likely to yield information important in prehistory or history."). If this is a kiln site, it is a type of kiln that has not been studied, and likely dates in part to a time period for which identified pottery firing kilns are rare and poorly studied. If it is not a kiln, it is a class of site about which we have virtually no information.

##### Recommendations

42SA17713 should be avoided if possible, or subjected to mitigative excavation if avoidance is not possible. To facilitate avoidance, a perimeter has been flagged around the site with blue flagging.

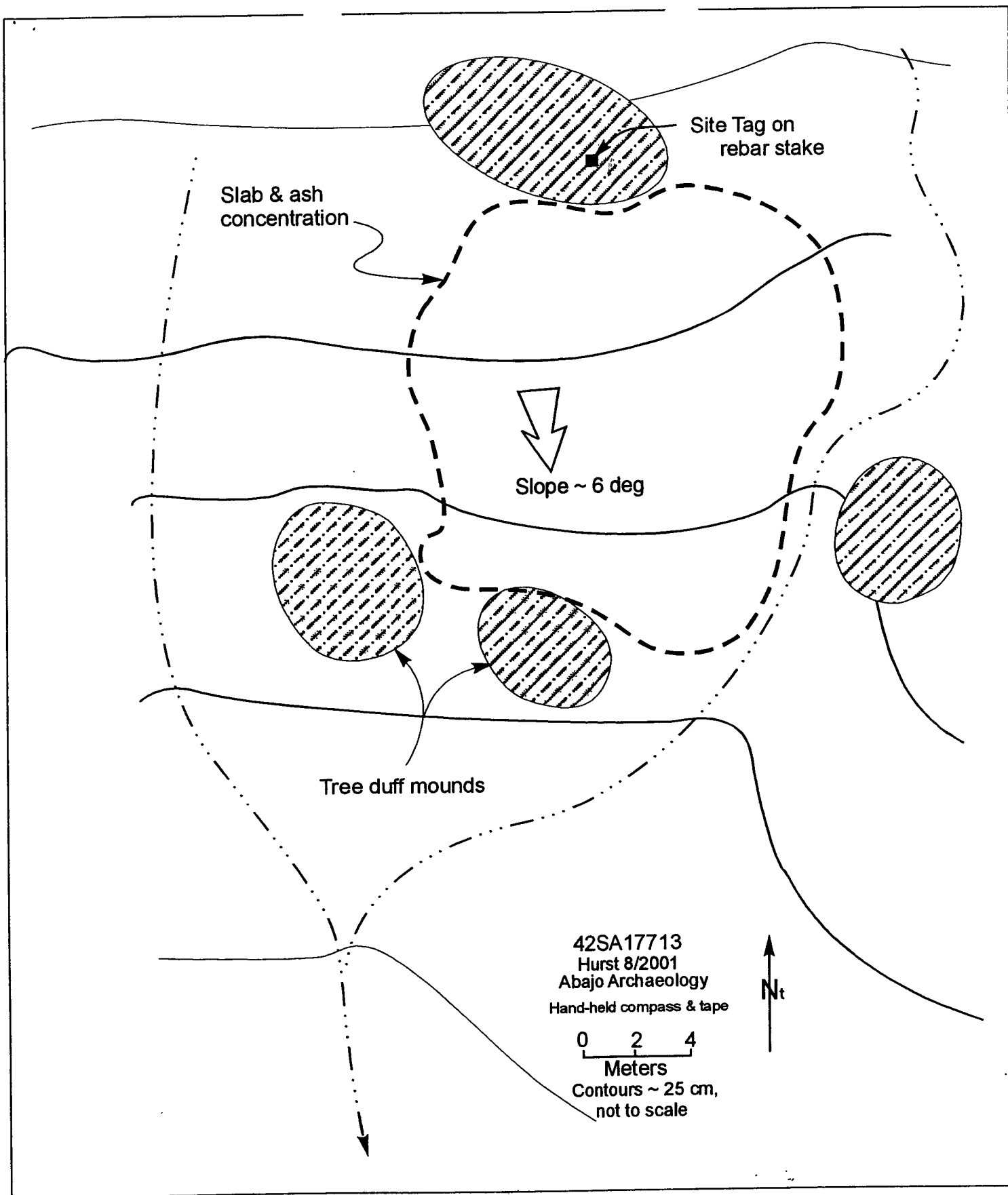


Figure 4. 42SA17713 site map.